



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety
and Inspection
Service

Washington, D.C.
20250

NOV 26 2002

Dr. José Ángel Del Valle Molina
Director General de Salud Animal
Comision Nacional de Sanidad Agropecuaria (CONASAG)
Secreteria de Agricultura, Ganadería, Desarrollo
Rural, Pesca y Alimentación (SAGARPA)
Recreo No. 14-11 avo. Piso
Col. Actipan
03230 Mexico, D.F.

Dear Dr. Del Valle:

Enclosed is a copy of the final report of the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) April 16 through May 8, 2002, audit of Mexico's meat inspection system. We have not received any comments on the draft final report of the same audit and, therefore, will assume that the Government of Mexico did not generate any comments.

During this audit, the FSIS auditor reported concerns regarding inadequate implementation of Sanitation Standard Operating Procedures (SSOP) and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) procedures. Accordingly, four establishments (TIF's 45, 105, 152, and 169) certified to export to the United States were to be issued "30-day" letters, which were notifications advising the four establishments to correct the deficiencies within thirty days. In our August 1, 2002, letter to you, we requested the Mexican government to confirm to FSIS that the four establishments had corrected the deficiencies or, if they did not, be removed from the list of establishments certified to export to the United States. Consequently, we have not received any notification from the Mexican government confirming corrective actions taken at these four establishments.

As we have previously advised you, FSIS expects foreign inspection systems to hold their certified establishments accountable to the same standards that FSIS applies to U.S. establishments. In regard to the issuance of "30-day" letters, we expected the Mexican government to issue these letters and following thirty days from issuance verify that the establishments made all necessary corrections. If corrections were not made, we would expect the Mexican government to remove them from the list of establishments certified to export to the United States.

As you know, FSIS is currently conducting an on-site audit of Mexico's meat and processed poultry inspection system. As part of this audit, the FSIS auditor will visit Establishments 45, 105, 152, and 169. Repeated deficiencies at these establishments regarding SSOP and HACCP implementation could result in FSIS removing their eligibility to export to the United States.

Regarding other FSIS findings noted during the April/May 2002 audit, we appreciate the corrective actions taken at the time of the audit and the Mexican government's commitment to operate an inspection system equivalent to that of the United States.

If you have any questions about the final report, please contact me at telephone number 202-720-3781 or facsimile number 202-690-4040. You may also reach me at my email address (sally.stratmoen@fsis.usda.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sally Stratmoen JD". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'S' and a distinct 'JD' at the end.

Sally Stratmoen, Acting Director
Equivalence Division
Office of International Affairs

Enclosure

cc: Enrique Lobo, Agricultural Counselor, Embassy of Mexico, Washington, DC
William Brant, Minister-Counselor, American Embassy, Mexico City
Robert Hoff, Area Officer, FAS
Linda Swacina, Associate Administrator, FSIS
Amy Winton, State Department
Donald Smart, Dir. Review Staff, TSC, OFO, FSIS
Sally Stratmoen, Acting Dir, ED, OIA, FSIS
Karen Stuck, Acting Deputy Associate Administrator, OIA, FSIS
Steve McDermott, ED, OIA, FSIS
Clark Danford, Acting Director, IEPD, OIA, FSIS
Country File - Mexico (Audit FY-2002)